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\$5.5 Million Literacy Subgrants Awarded to 128 Schools, Districts

LITTLE ROCK — Students around the state will soon experience the benefits of enhanced literacy programs thanks to the distribution of \$5.5 million in federal funds this year.

The U.S. Department of Education previously awarded the Arkansas Department of Education a five-year grant totaling \$38 million (the most allowed under the grant) for the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program, which will improve literacy outcomes for students in grades Pre-K through 12. Ninety-five percent of the funds will be subgranted to schools, districts, and community partners.

Since being awarded the grant, ADE accepted applications for the Successful Outcomes for Arkansas Readers subgrant and has identified the following 128 schools and districts that will receive funds this first year: <https://bit.ly/3nwdXFh>. An additional \$1.2 million is awarded to the Arkansas Imagination Library, a program under Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library that provides free books to families.

“We were extremely excited to award these much-needed funds to deserving schools and districts that submitted comprehensive plans to improve literacy at their schools and in their communities,” ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. “I cannot stress enough the importance of building a strong foundation in reading, and through this grant, educators will take their literacy programs to the next level, resulting in increased student access to books, robust reading programs, and an improved culture of reading.”

Schools and districts will use the grants to do the following:

- develop and implement a comprehensive literacy instruction plan across all content areas;
- provide high-quality professional development opportunities for educators;
- provide assistance to leadership regarding the support, development, administration, and evaluation of high-quality literacy initiatives;
- coordinate the involvement of early childhood educators;
- foster collaboration among various stakeholders; and
- build a culture of reading.

The subgrants build upon the efforts of R.I.S.E. Arkansas (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) that was launched by ADE and Gov. Asa Hutchinson in January 2017. The program’s objectives are to strengthen reading instruction, create community collaboration, and build a culture of reading.

To learn more about R.I.S.E. Arkansas, visit <http://www.risearkansas.org>.

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